

Thirty-ninth Annual Report

MARYLAND STATE BOARD
of
MOTION PICTURE CENSORS



Offices

212 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore 1, Maryland

785747

Thirty-ninth Annual Report
MARYLAND STATE BOARD
OF
MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
1954 - 1955

C. MORTON GOLDSTEIN
Chairman

MAUDE B. DORRANCE
Vice-Chairman and Treasurer

WALTER S. RINGLER
Secretary

ELMER P. BUTZ
Administrative Assistant

Offices
212 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore 1, Maryland

STATE CENSORSHIP

The laws of Maryland as to censorship of motion pictures are considered a proper exercise of prior restraints upon expression, and not an unconstitutional abridgement of free speech and free press guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

Motion pictures are a significant medium for the communication of ideas. They may affect public attitudes and behavior in a variety of ways, ranging from direct espousal of a political or social doctrine to a subtle shaping of thought which characterizes all artistic expression. As an organ of public opinion, the importance of motion pictures is not lessened by the fact that they entertain as well as inform. The line between entertaining and informing is too elusive for the absolute protection of the basic right to a free press.

The Supreme Court (*Burstyn v Wilson* #522, May 26, 1952) has held that constitutional guarantees do not authorize absolute freedom to exhibit every motion picture of every kind at all times and at all places.

In keeping with Court decisions, the General Assembly of Maryland at its 1955 Session modified the law and by virtue of Article 66A of the Annotated Code of Maryland, 1951 Edition, Chapter 201, effective June 1, 1955, the law presently provides:

"6. (a) The Board shall examine or supervise the examination of all films or views to be exhibited or used in the State of Maryland and shall approve and license such films or views which are moral and proper, and shall disapprove such as are obscene, or such as tend, in the judgment of the Board, to debase or corrupt morals or incite to crimes. All films exclusively portraying current events or pictorial news of the day, commonly called news reels, may be exhibited without examination and no license or fees shall be required therefor.

(b) For the purposes of this Article, a motion picture film or view shall be considered to be obscene if, when considered as a whole, its calculated purpose or dominant effect is substantially to arouse sexual desires, and if the probability of this effect is so great as to outweigh whatever other merits the film may possess.

(c) For the purposes of this Article, a motion picture film or view shall be considered to be of such a character that its exhibition would tend to debase or corrupt morals if its dominant purpose or effect is erotic or pornographic; or if it portrays acts of sexual immorality, lust or lewdness, or if it expressly or impliedly presents such acts as desirable, acceptable or proper patterns of behavior.

(d) For the purposes of this Article, a motion picture film or view shall be considered of such a character that its exhibition would tend to incite to crime if the theme or the manner of its presentation presents the commission of criminal acts or contempt for law as constituting profitable, desirable, acceptable, respectable or commonly accepted behavior, or if it advocates or teaches the use of, or the methods of use of, narcotics or habit-forming drugs."

Our statute establishes standards as will prevent the showing of motion pictures creating a clear and present danger to the moral well-being of the people of the State. Such standards do not disregard the requirement for definiteness as the basis of proscriptions and legal sanctions for their disobedience.

CONCLUSION

The Board expresses its appreciation to your Excellency for your sincere support and cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,

C. MORTON GOLDSTEIN, *Chairman*

MAUDE B. DORRANCE, *Vice-Chairman*

WALTER S. RINGLER, *Secretary*

August 31, 1955.

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1955

RECEIPTS

FEES:

Original Reels - 16 MM (113,081 ft.)	564.00	
Original Reels - 35 MM (5,944,780 ft.)	\$14,294.00	
		\$14,858.00
Duplicate Reels - 35 MM (50,037,638 ft.) ...	\$56,727.00	
Duplicate Reels - 16 MM		
		\$56,727.00
Sale of Substitute Seals (2,299)	2,299.00	
		\$73,884.00
Deposited to Credit of State Treasurer		\$73,884.00

EXPENSES

SALARIES:

Board Members	\$ 9,300.24	
Other Employees	40,122.80	\$49,423.04

OTHER EXPENSES:

Communication	\$ 790.38	
Contractual Services, Office	91.32	
Light, Heat, Power and Water89	
Printing	115.00	
Office Supplies	995.53	
Office Equipment	40.00	
Insurance	32.50	
Office Rent	6,999.96	
Film Approval Seals	2,590.00	
RCA Inspection Service	329.16	
Court Costs	177.20	
Motion Picture Machine Supplies	128.28	
Motion Picture Equipment	3,431.48	
Traveling	1,033.86	
Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	738.93	
		17,494.49
		\$66,917.53

BUDGET ACCOUNT (Per Comptroller)

Appropriations, 1955	\$68,912.00	
		\$68,912.00
Less Reversion to Reserve Fund		1,994.47
General Fund Disbursement		\$66,917.53

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS REPORT OF FILMS EXAMINED

July 1, 1954 — June 30, 1955

1954	Films Original	Films Duplicate	Reels Original	Reels Duplicate	No. of Ft. Original	No. of Ft. Duplicate	Films Approved	Films Modified In Part, Ori.	Films Modified In Part, Dup.	Films Denied
July	185	1,416	555	4,402	432,069	3,517,315	1,582	0	19	0
August	162	1,248	469	5,386	594,171	4,474,915	1,379	2	29	0
September	191	1,557	550	5,452	421,808	4,264,622	1,746	0	2	0
October	179	1,406	790	5,134	627,473	4,070,947	1,577	0	8	0
November	180	1,332	664	5,238	511,752	3,968,701	1,491	1	19	1 (2)
December	175	1,398	735	5,742	585,870	4,441,640	1,563	4	6	0
1955										
January	164	1,249	598	5,615	464,951	4,188,872	1,395	1	16	1 (1)
February	166	1,345	557	4,418	430,109	3,236,243	1,505	1	5	0
March	159	1,125	552	4,949	439,395	4,125,979	1,275	1	8	0
April	169	1,245	639	5,149	503,497	4,008,043	1,411	0	3	0
Sub-total	1,730	13,321	6,109	51,485	5,011,095	40,297,277	14,924	10	115	2
May	167	1,223	750	6,926	492,003	5,344,987	1,389	1 (3)	0	0
June	122	713	701	5,155	554,763	4,395,374	832	2 (2-4)	1	0
Sub-total	289	1,936	1,451	12,081	1,046,766	9,740,361	2,221	3	1	0
GRAND TOTAL	2,019	15,257	7,560	63,566	6,057,861	50,037,638	17,145	13	116	2

(1) Game of Love—Denied license on 1-12-55—Reversed by Baltimore City Court 3-16-55

(2) Companions of the Night—Denied license on 11-30-54—Approved as modified 6-22-55

(3) Le Plaisir—Approved as modified 5-24-55

(4) Devil Within—Approved as modified 6-15-55